

**An eye-witness report
by Brian Grogan**

15p



**INSURRECTION
IN TEHERAN**

IN IRAN today, there is every prospect for the continuing development of the struggle of the masses not only against every remaining vestige of the barbaric regime of the Shah but also for a democratically organised society whose maintenance depends on the independent organisation of the toiling Iranian masses. Of course, the capitalist press would have us believe otherwise. However, no matter how hard it tries to lump the situation in Iran with other Moslem states like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, there is no disguising that what we have seen in Iran is a national, democratic revolution which has entailed a most incredible level of mobilisation of the population. And it is this deep involvement of the Iranian masses which guarantees that it won't be an easy task to roll back the gains that have been made already.

This character of the events in Iran with its enormous implications for the projects of U.S. imperialism has prompted the capitalist press to try and discredit the gains and overall goals for which the masses have fought. The picture painted by the press is that the Shah tried to modernise and westernise Iran, but he went too rapidly. Today, we are told, there is an almighty backlash against his efforts with reactionary Moslem leaders capturing the sentiment of the masses to institute a rigid religious code of life. **But nothing could be further from the truth!**

Of course religion plays a role in Iranian events. And there are even some Moslems who would like to see a society as it exists in Saudi Arabia or Pakistan where those who drink can be subject to lashes of the whip; or women who commit adultery, stoned; or thieves can have their hands cut off. But if anyone tried to substitute this code for the democratic and social demands of the masses in Iran today, they would soon get short shrift. In Teheran, despite Western press reports, the cinemas are all open now that the Savak is unable to burn them down. The great Islamic feature films which are showing include such titles as 'Superman' and 'Dracula'. An army captain responsible for burning down a cinema in Ahwaz with a loss of 400 lives, has been executed. To be sure, drink is not yet widely available in the shops and there is a massive moral pressure against drink. But it is available. In fact, in some districts it was delivered to the door for the period of its unavailability on public sale. Yet these aspects of the new Islamic republic are hardly in keeping with what we read in the press today. Only if the present upsurge of the masses is defeated will the Islamic code be able to be fully imposed. But that prospect is a long way off.

The action of the masses in Iran today is far from reactionary. There is one sentiment which provides the motor force for the struggle. That is the thirst of the Iranian masses for democratic rights. This helps to explain why Khomeini today has the leadership of the struggle. In all of his 25 years in exile, Khomeini was firm on

one issue: he was opposed to the Shah's despotic regime. He wanted to do away with the Pahlavi dynasty.

The Pahlavi regime in Iran was installed in 1953 by U.S. imperialism with the backing of the British. The Shah was put into power through a coup d'état against popular will. It proceeded—with the connivance of the CIA and the US government—to construct one of the most repressive regimes in the world. The only analogous cases are Hitler's Germany or Pinochet's Chile. No opposition — not even of the mildest kind — was tolerated in this one-party state. Oppressed nationalities weren't even allowed to use their own language.

Events leading to the insurrection

The fate of the developing mass movement against the Shah was sealed with the involvement of the oil workers in the big strike wave that began in autumn 1979. The most decisive section of the Iranian working class, the oil workers, demanded trade union rights; an end to the Shah regime; the release of all political prisoners; etc. — and they were determined to stay on strike until these demands were met. These linked into the cycle of mass demonstrations which reached a crescendo at the turn of the year. Despite wholesale slaughter — some 10,000 were killed in the year up to the Shah's downfall — the mass movement grew. Khomeini played a resolute role in the direction he gave to this movement. Don't let up, he advised, until the Shah has gone. In the face of ever growing protests, involving some of the biggest demonstrations in history, the Shah was finally forced to leave Iran. This gave a tremendous boost to the mass movement which now focussed on the demand for Khomeini to return from his exile in France.

The Bakhtiar Government, appointed by the Shah knew that if Khomeini was put into power on the backs of a mass movement, this would spell the end of the monarchist state. It was for this reason that Bakhtiar responded with an enormous and vicious show of strength. The army, under Bakhtiar's orders, prevented the return of Khomeini for an entire week. Quite the opposite was achieved by the army's display of force. The mobilisation of the people deepened. On 31 January three million marched on what is now called Liberation Square and a massacre occurred such that fire-engines were needed to wash away the blood on the streets. Despite the assault by the army and its British-made Chieftain tanks, the people resisted and continued to demand Khomeini's return. The demand was irresistible.

From the exit of the Shah right up to the insurrection, the Bakhtiar government under direct challenge. People just refused to accept its authority. In fact, there was a situation where two powers existed in Iran. Not a classical dual power situation of two class

forces, but a situation where two contending governmental forces — the Bakhtiar Government and Khomeini and his Government headed by Bazargan — were jockeying for dominance.

Neighborhood committees — especially in the workers districts in South Tehran — began to be more bold, organising defense guards against the army trying to impose the curfew. This was an extension of their previous role in food distribution and keeping the neighbourhoods clear.

Isfahan, one of the cities to the south of Tehran which is overwhelmingly working class, was taken over by the masses. Occupations of factories in many cities abounded. The strike committee in Ahwaz called for linking up with other sectors and with the neighborhood committees there. Various Governmental Ministries began to declare their allegiances for Khomeini.

The character of the mobilisations to greet Khomeini was astonishing. It's difficult to imagine 8 million people demonstrating. It's hard to conceive of such mass involvement. But for anyone who was there, one thing became clear very quickly. This activity was not the result of some religious fanaticism. Religious slogans were used. But they had quite a different content. During the insurrection the shouts of 'Allahu Akbar' or 'God is Great' could be heard everywhere.

This is traditionally used to wake up Moslems for morning prayers at the mosque. It is quite different, however, when thousands of people on rooftops raise this slogan to demoralise the troops attempting to impose the curfew or raise similar slogans with clenched denouncing the helicopter circling overhead or using it, as did the airmen to alert the local community that they were threatened with attack from the Imperial Guard. 'Allahu Akbar' became the rallying cry of the masses fighting for their rights.

Of course these two governmental powers couldn't remain in equilibrium for long, given the degree of mobilisation. The turning point which led immediately to the insurrection after Khomeini's arrival was the demonstration on Thursday, 8 February called by Khomeini in support of his alternative Prime Minister, Bazargan. For the first time, the armed forces appeared on a pro-Khomeini demonstration, in a direct challenge to military discipline. These were the Homofars, the airforce technicians, who marched alongside 2 million others to demand the downfall of Bakhtiar.

It is not too surprising that it was the Homofars who were the first to publically show their support for Khomeini. The Homofars, unlike the rest of the armed forces and even the airforce, do not live at the barracks. They live at home and travel into work each morning. Although they have the discipline of the armed forces, they are in many ways like highly skilled workers, needed by the airforce thanks to its incredible level of technological sophistication.

Furthermore, the Homofars had a history of organising for their rights. In fact, 250 had been executed for just this kind of activity during the period of the military government, including under the Bakhtiar Government. In response, families who demanded to know the whereabouts of the airmen had gone on a sit-in and hunger strike at the Ministry of Justice, during the week of Khomeini's arrival.

The Bakhtiar Government tried to cover up all this. However, the day before the pro-Bazargan march, the Homofars had gone to the girls' school which Khomeini had taken over as his headquarters and saluted him. The authorities claimed that photographs published in the press were doctored; and that it had never occurred.

The actions of the airmen the very next day could not be as easily swept aside, however. The Homofars got changed in civilian clothes that Thursday and left the barracks as if to go home. But they took their uniforms with them. Changing into their uniforms in nearby houses, they joined the demonstration. Once again, the Bakhtiar Government chose to deal with the growing mass defiance, this time of the armed forces, by a show of strength. But this time, it sparked off an insurrection.

THE INSURRECTION

One Friday evening, following the pro-Bazargan demonstration, the silence of the curfew in southeastern Tehran was suddenly broken by cries of 'Allahu Akbar'. The airforce cadets were appealing to everyone living in the surrounding area to help repel an invasion by the Royal Guard. This élite force had been called in to quell a demonstration which broke out in the mess in the course of the television screening of Khomeini's return. The army chiefs reasoned that a vicious repressive sortie would smash the growing revolt. The Imperial Guard spared no mercy. A tank was driven right through the walls of the barracks into the mess where the cadets were assembled. Despite the mobilisation of the people in the neighborhood, the Imperial Guard were able to administer savage beatings, and make large numbers of arrests. Their work done, the Imperial Guards returned to barracks.

This was the scene that greeted the Homofars when they returned to the barracks the next morning. Enraged at the savagery of the Royal Guard, they demanded arms. Officers who refused to give them arms were executed. The armoury was raided. New officers were elected and battle stations taken up. The call 'Allahu Akbar' went up.

The Fedayeen guerrillas were the first to respond to the call and they took up positions with the Homofars. But the decisive development was the mobilisation of the people in the neighborhood

and the continuing reinforcement of this throughout the day. When more troops were sent in, they failed to rescue the Guards. The tanks that were brought in were met with Molotov cocktails and they were battered with massive girders taken from nearby building sites. The Guards—especially the dreaded Immortal Brigade—came off worst. One hundred and sixty three people — the majority of them from the Royal Guards — were killed.

The balance of forces was ultimately determined in the battle by the 10 or 12 thousand people from the surrounding neighborhood who rushed to defend the airmen. The political consequences of destroying these numbers of people were too severe to be contemplated. Yet that was the only way the Bakhtiar Government could have proved successful. This support and mobilisation from the nearby areas was spontaneous, but it did have a degree of organisation. Standing on the flat-topped roofs in the neighborhood, one could see the coordination.

By the early afternoon the airmen had taken control of the area around the base. They issued weapons to civilians. Anyone with an identification card showing they had served in the armed forces got a weapon. Thousands began digging trenches and building barricades. People took positions on rooftops. By this time, the rest of the city had begun to mobilise. Cars raced up and down the streets honking their horns to spread the word. People waved strips of white cloth — a symbol that medical supplies were needed. Signs were posted everywhere describing the types of blood and serum needed for the wounded.

Young people who had served as marshals in recent demonstrations began organising the streets. They blocked off some roads so that ambulances and cars of supporters could get to their destinations. Other streets were closed to protect people from gunfire. Everyone was urged to go to the hospitals with supplies.

In Ferdowsi Square just after lunch on Saturday, hundreds gathered. Cars rushed back and forth with news of the battle going on about a mile away. All of a sudden there were cheers. A motorcycle sped by carrying a soldier who had come over to the side of the people.

In a desperate move, the military authorities announced at 2pm that the curfew would begin at 4.30 that afternoon. They hoped to isolate the airmen by driving the civilian population from the streets. In a working-class neighbourhood of southern Tehran, the immediate reaction was to defy the curfew.

But then there was an appeal from religious oppositionist Ayatollah Taleghani for people to return home and for the army to go back to the barracks. Many people started to get off the streets. Shortly before 4.30, however, Khomeini called on the people to defy the curfew and protect the airmen. Immediately in both

working-class areas and petty-bourgeois and wealthier sections of the city, the people massed in the streets. They started fires in the middle of the streets and erected barricades. Tires were thrown in the flames to create a thick smoke that diffused tear gas and blocked the view of army helicopters.

In southern Tehran, the most combative area of the city, practically the whole population demonstrated in the streets. Huge barricades were built with cars and sandbags. The army stood paralysed. There were only scattered attempts by the Royal Guards to force people to obey the curfew.

In reality, the army had collapsed by Saturday evening. The government evacuated troops to areas outside the city because it was afraid to send its soldiers to confront the people. That night, people began occupying police stations, taking weapons and files. On Shah Reza Avenue the trees and sidewalks were strewn with police reports and documents that had been thrown out the windows of a police station. Although there was resistance from some cops, most of the police had long since gone into hiding. On the western outskirts of the city, huge barricades were erected on the highways to Karaj, a town about forty kilometres away. This was to prevent other troops from invading Tehran. And in Karaj, thousands of people surrounded the army base to prevent any troop movements.

On Sunday morning, masses of people poured onto army bases and into police stations in Tehran. Royal Guards shot demonstrators at some locations, but most of the bases were deserted. People seized anything they could find: machine guns, bayonets, helmets, walkie-talkies. They drove army trucks and tanks off the bases and into the streets.

At 10am Sunday morning at Ferdowsi Square, large groups of people — some with knives or clubs, some waving white strips of cloth — marched toward Fowfieh Square, near Doshan Tappeh air base. The atmosphere was less tense now. People felt that victory was at hand. At 12.30pm there was an explosion of joy: 'The radio has just announced that it is on the side of the people,' someone told us. (Both the radio and television had been under military control.) At 2pm, the radio announced that the army high command stated that it would no longer resist the people.

At many intersections there were hundreds of people with arms: rebel soldiers, airmen still wearing their blue uniforms, youth in green U.S. army jackets. Several blocks from one of these intersections, a battle was still raging. Ambulances rushed back and forth. People were trying to take over a military police station. These takeovers were spontaneous. While some members of two urban guerilla groups, Fedayeen and Mujahadeen, participated, the decisive factors were the involvement of masses of people and

the inability of the military to effectively resist. There was no real leadership or organisation of the insurrection.

Other strategic buildings and symbols of the monarchy fell the general post office, Savak headquarters, the Gholestan Palace, where the shah held state ceremonies. Demonstrators stormed the walls of Qasr Prison where 3,000 political prisoners were held. All the prisoners were quickly brought out and taken to homes.

Meanwhile, at Tehran University, masses of students gathered. One team of women built barricades. Someone had made a mock report card for the shah, giving him an F for human rights and an A-plus for stupidity. The card said: 'Since the shah's father is not here to sign the report card, Jimmy Carter has signed it for him.' The celebration went on all afternoon. V signs were waved from cars, houses, and from the sidewalks. Many cars and trucks passed by with the occupants waving their captured weapons. Army trucks sometimes filled with 100 people, many of them armed, drove past. There was a parade of tanks, covered with people, including some soldiers, down the main streets. The soldiers grinned and waved pictures of Khomeini. A bus full of sailors went by, with their fists in the air. One group of soldiers joined the celebration in front of the army hospital. 'We are very happy to be with the people', one soldier said with relief. 'I can't express my happiness,' said another. 'Tell the American people the truth.'

At 8pm Sunday night we turned on the television. The television workers who went on strike four months ago to protest military censorship had reclaimed the station. 'Good evening. This is the picture of the revolution,' the announcer began. He urged people to come down to the station to protect it from possible attack. 'We want to help the nation get injured people to the hospitals,' he explained.

Mehdi Bazargan, the prime minister appointed by Khomeini, then made a televised speech. 'The joint chiefs of staff support us,' Bazargan claimed. He urged people not to take over any more military bases. 'Do not surround the headquarters of the joint chiefs of staff,' he insisted. 'Don't let disrupters damage anything.' The main theme of his speech was 'have patience': rely on his government and the 'good faith' of the generals.

But outside in the streets, the people were relying on themselves. Battles were still raging at one officer training base. The television announcer appealed for people to go there to aid the freedom fighters. Other appeals were made through the TV, which had become sort of an organiser in the situation. The electrical workers asked people to use less electricity so there would be adequate power for the hospitals, which were still receiving the wounded.

On Monday morning, 12 February, 3,500 prisoners from Ghezel Hesar Prison and thousands from Evin Prison were released. Many

of the prisoners from Evin had been severely tortured. One had had his tongue cut out and another was paralysed. A final bastion of the old regime, the Saltatnad Abad complex — which included the central Savak headquarters, garrison of the royal guard, and a number of jails — fell. Four of the top generals were killed, and many others captured.

In its dying breath, the monarchy killed more than 1,000 people in Tehran and the other cities throughout Iran that followed its example. The great mass insurrectionary uprising of Tehran, although it broke out in a spontaneous way, climaxed a tremendous mass upsurge that toppled the Pahlavi monarchy and has opened a new stage in the Iranian revolution.

Yet the degree of self-organisation to reach even this stage shouldn't be over-estimated. The workers involved in the 100-day general strike, surely one of the longest in labour history, represent the highest degree of organisation achieved in Iran. Although workers were in the thick of the fighting, throughout the insurrection the strike committees, as such, played no role. Of course, trade unions, except those of the Shah which don't warrant the name, just did not exist. In the army, there was an equal lack of organisation. Rank and file committees had never been formed. Even in the neighbourhoods, any independent organisation from the mosques and Khomeini didn't occur. There were neighbourhood committees which emerged during the period of the general strike. These were based on the mosques — the only place where debate and discussion could take place under the Shah. In this period they ensured distribution of food, the cleaning up of the area, and the organisation of local defence. This defence was unarmed, but after the insurrection when the arsenals were raided, they acquired weapons.

No actual linkup occurred between the strike committees and the neighbourhood committees. Which took the leading role, therefore, varied. For example, in Ahwaz, one of the major oil producing towns, the strike committee played an absolutely central role. When anyone wanted anything, the matter was referred to the strike committee. In Tehran, it was the neighbourhood committees which played more of a centralising role for the struggle. In fact, strikers, like the oil workers in Ahwaz, who wanted to get representatives in the neighbourhood committees were under pressure not to do so, on the grounds it would 'split' the struggle.

The neighbourhood committees are Khomeini's entry into the communities. This is why Khomeini has oriented towards them in an effort to regain control over the situation. His first attempts to take the initiative failed. No sooner was the insurrection victorious when he declared the possession of arms 'haram', that is, completely forbidden and against Islam. Despite this, less than

20,000 of the estimated 100,000 arms returned.

With television reports of battles raging in other towns, like Tabriz, it was only the mad, or the strongly committed Moslems, who obeyed. Khomeini then urged that all arms be registered through the mosques. His success here is yet to be determined and is doubtless related to his ability to keep control over the mosque-based neighbourhood committees.

Because the neighbourhood committees have been historically tied to the mosques he has been attempting to bureaucratically control them through integrating them into the hierarchy of the mosque. In the past, although never democratically organised on a delegate basis, the committees discussed the jobs to be done and collectively decided a division of labour. Now mass meetings are out. In several instances recently, left wingers have been edged out by demanding that they register at the mosque and then not calling on them to participate in the duties.

As with the call to return arms, so with Khomeini's other early efforts to restitch together the capitalist state. The proof of the strength of the mass movement lies in just how quickly he has been forced to retreat. Of crucial importance here is the reconstitution of the officer corps. Just after the insurrection, Khomeini appointed new men to head up the different armed forces. Everyone of his new appointments were drawn from the old officer corps, and had records which implicated them with the Shah's regime.

The Homofars once again took the lead. Khomeini made it clear since the victory of the insurrection, that the time for demonstrations was over. Just three days after the victory, the Homofars were back on the streets. Given the role the Homofars had played, it was impossible to brand them as counter-revolutionaries. On Wednesday, they marched to Khomeini's headquarters to protest against the new head of the airforce and all other military appointments. Their demands didn't stop with the removal of the compromised brass however. They also called for the right to elect their officers, the right to vote, to participate in political parties and more generally to involve themselves in the revolution. Demands for rank and file committees and for a 'People's Army' were also raised. The very next day, Khomeini was forced to retreat and the head of the airforce was removed. Unrest continues unabated. To date there have been four different heads. And the removal of each testifies to the continuing strength of the mass movement.

Khomeini's problems with the Homofars didn't end with the new appointment, however. The attempts of his 'Komiteh' to censor news of the demonstration at his headquarters by reporting it on television as 'a march to greet Khomeini' created an uproar. The masses weren't about to tolerate one of the most repugnant

features of the Shah's regime by a government they had put in power.

The result was the circumscribing of the power of the head of television. Rather than the rule of one individual, Khomeini was forced to institute an entire committee to control the media, composed of representatives from television workers, writers' and lawyers' associations, and so on.

Today, Khomeini has found it difficult to invest his power in the Bazargan government. Most of the major decisions have, in fact, been taken by Khomeini's Revolutionary Council — a body whose composition remains unknown. The credibility of the government is going to be now severely tested with the return to work.

The Return to Work

One week after the insurrection, Khomeini issued a call for a return to work. Virtually everyone responded, putting an end to the 100-day general strike. But workers went back to take *forward* their victory. They had won in the fight to remove the Shah. Political prisoners were all freed. Savak was smashed. Khomeini had returned.

The return to work signaled a new stage in the struggle of the Iranian masses. Immediately upon entering the factories and offices, workers organised mass meetings. The most fundamental rights of workers were discussed and decisions taken to enforce them. The call for real trade unions was made; wage increases were demanded; owners were brought to the factory and tried; top officials were sacked. Demands for nationalisation were widespread.

The oil workers are again in the forefront. Oil-fields are already nationalised in Iran, and they have been the scene of an immediate lesson in workers' control and in what oil workers call 'Iranianisation'. In Ahwaz, they immediately held a mass meeting to remove the 11 top officials and they elected a committee to run the fields. In Abadan, they refused to go back until Bazargan assured them that their demands would be met. The workers demanded the creation of a 'People's Army' comprising 'patriotic officers and soldiers' and members of the Mujahedeen and Fedayeen. They wanted all those involved in corruption expelled from the industry and called for the participation of workers' representatives on Khomeini's Revolutionary Council. Other demands included the establishment of employees' unions; an end to the discrimination between technicians and production workers; equal rights for women; and the rehiring of all those sacked in the industry during the past 10 years!

Every section of Iranian society is now beginning to press their own

demands. Women are becoming ever more insistent. They didn't play an autonomous role in the insurrection, but in nearly all battles they participated alongside men — even if, under the pressure of the Moslems, they were sometimes segregated into separate contingents. Although they participated in the neighbourhood committees, including in the general meetings in the mosque, religious rules still applied. So women were curtained off — even though they made their points by passing notes under the curtain. However, these restrictions are being increasingly challenged, given the practical involvement of women in the struggle.

By and large, women are the most suspicious of Khomeini. A few days before his arrival, he had created an uproar by his negative comments about the role of women. Partly as a response to this, a 'national organisation for the re-awakening of Iranian women' was formed. Demands have also been raised for a woman representative to be in the Revolutionary Council.

The nationalities, too, are beginning to raise their own demands. Encouraged by the insurrection, rebel Kurdish tribes have been attacking Gendarmerie posts. In another incident supporters of Jalal Talebanie, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), attacked and occupied government buildings in the province's border area with Iraq. And a 'People's Consulate' established in Maharabad, in Kurdistan, passed a resolution to 'make sure that the political leaders and the ayatollah know that within the framework of Iran and democracy in Iran, the Kurdish people have their own national rights'. Similar things are happening in Ajarbaistan.

Such developments have sent the Revolutionary Council into a fury. Assistant Prime Minister Amir Entezam stated that the Bazargan government 'recognised no declaration of autonomy'. Khomeini himself declared that he would 'crush bandits and unlawful elements', referring to events in Kurdistan.

In the face of this reality the whole of Tehran is buzzing with talk about when Khomeini will call a Constituent Assembly. Instead, a referendum is being prepared whose only question will be: 'Do you want an Islamic republic or a monarchy?' So the workers and oppressed are beginning to see more clearly that only the development of their own committees of struggle—in the factories, in the neighbourhoods and in the armed forces — will guarantee the convening of a Constituent Assembly which is not going to take orders from any body appointed from above.

The demands of different sections of the population for representation on the Revolutionary Council foreshadows the understanding that only a workers' and peasants' government which takes its authority from these committees — and not from the capitalist state and the capitalist army — will be able to implement the sort of demands that are now being raised. For only a

government prepared to break with the logic of capitalism and imperialism can possibly develop the tremendous power and enthusiasm which the struggle of the past 18 months has revealed.

THE LEFT EMERGES

‘ It is in relation to the fight for a Constituent Assembly that we should look at the political organisations which are claiming to represent the workers and the oppressed. The most important organisation is the Fedayeen. This was formed in the early 70s and has existed as a tightly organised guerrilla formation. Its role in the insurrection has boosted its popularity tremendously. A rally called by this organisation a week after the return to work attracted nearly 100,000 people.

The Fedayeen correctly emphasises the role of the working class which it thinks will come into its own in the next stage of the revolution. But because it anticipates a bout of severe repression in the present phase, it continues to keep most of its members underground and stresses military training for new recruits. Accordingly, it doesn't have a clear understanding of the relation between self-organisation of the class in committees based on delegates from the factory, the neighbourhood, and from rank and file soldiers, and the armed struggle.

Moreover, the Fedayeen is confused on the role of Khomeini. To be sure, it is hostile to the Bazargan government, but it couples this hostility with a demand for a place on Khomeini's Revolutionary Committee. By thereby pledging support to Khomeini, the Fedayeen is disarmed in front of his present offensive against it. That's what forced it to change its recent call for a demonstration to Khomeini's headquarters into a mass meeting.

Despite these criticisms, the Fedayeen has so far taken a clear stand on the major issues posed. In the present context, even its demands for a People's Army is an alternative to Khomeini's attempt to reconsolidate the capitalist army and its officer corps. Moreover, its positions on many key issues is either in flux or corresponding already to the interests of the working class. It favours workers' control, free and equal rights for women and democratic rights for the oppressed nationalities (although it falls short of championing the cause of self-determination).

Alongside the Fedayeen, is the Mujahedeen. This is another guerrilla organisation, but part of the Moslem movement. Its political positions have not clearly emerged to distinguish it from Khomeini. However, the Mujahedeen has recently supported positions close to those of the Fedayeen and have backed the criticisms of Khomeini made by the Fedayeen.

The Tudeh Party is Iran's pro-Moscow Communist Party. It has played very little role in organising the mass movement to bring

down the Shah and was totally absent as an organised force during the course of the insurrection. Swinging right behind Khomeini in the recent past, the Tudeh Party explained that 'in these days, of primary importance is the unity and solidarity of all the political forces of Iran which have fought for victory.'

The Tudeh Party's entire strategy has been exploded by the events of the insurrection. Rather than relying on progressive officers of the army and moving at a snail's pace so that the so called 'national bourgeoisie' would not be alienated by the radicalisation of the movement, a profound uprising has emerged from below. The resulting loss of direction, because reality has borne such little relation to the Stalinist schema, is coupled with the discredit the Tudeh Party has in the eyes of the class fighters in Iran. Both factors have helped to throw the CP into crisis. In the last period, therefore, it has come out in full support of the Fedayeen.

Since the downfall of the Shah a new Trotskyist party—affiliated to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International—has emerged in Iran: the Socialist Workers' Party. This is a fusion of four different forces, including two currents — in Europe and in the USA — formed in the opposition; a current that formed in the mass movement of the past period in Iran, and the supporters of the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI) in Iran. The new organisation has forces in every major city and town and has put out a fused newspaper — the 'Worker' — in a run of 50,000 copies. It has distributed a quarter of a million copies of 'A Bill of Rights for working people and toiling masses of Iran' and is presently undergoing rapid growth.

PROSPECTS

Iran's February insurrection has not ended the Iranian revolution. As the next period will show only a socialist breakthrough will allow the demands raised by the masses to be fulfilled. The revolution either goes forward to socialism or back to dependence on imperialism. Khomeini's project and role is clear! he is out to reconsolidate the fragmented and weakened capitalist state. The first step is to reconstitute the army.

The main instrument to hold the line against the demands of the masses is Khomeini. Undoubtedly his authority remains overwhelming. But the way he was installed in power — through a mass uprising from below — means that the masses will not take lightly any attacks on their democratic rights. Nevertheless, Khomeini's political capital will be expended as he tries to put himself against the economic and social demands of the masses.

This will create tremendous opportunities for the building of a socialist alternative. Despite the establishment of an Islamic

republic, and the dominance of the Moslem movement, the early action of the Bazargan government has already put the Moslems on the defensive. A massive thirst for *socialist* ideas is emerging. Moreover, great possibilities exist to build mass organisations — from trades unions and a women's movement, to workers' councils and even soviet forms of organisation. Very favourable conditions therefore exist for building a revolutionary party which when the next decisive clash comes, can give a lead towards a socialist breakthrough and workers' power.

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